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RUINS OF GREY ABBEY, COUNTY OF DOWN.

This once celebrated abbey was situated in the vicinity of a small town of the same name in the north of Ireland, about ten miles from Belfast, and within a short distance of Strangford Lough. The ruins are of considerable extent, in good preservation, and finely situated for effect. The abbey is thus quaintly described in an old work entitled the Montgomery MSS., which has been recently published:—"Neare and in view of Rosemount-house, are the walls of a large abbey of curious work, (ruinated in Tircowen's rebellion); it is called in inquisitions and patents Abathium de fugo Dei; in Irish, Monestrellea; in English, Grey (or Hoare) Abby from the order of fryars who enjoyed it; and had, in ancient times, belonged thereunto, all its own parish, both in spiritualibus et temporalibus, conferred by De Courcy, at the inshanes of his wife, the king of the Isle of Man's daughter, as Camlden reports (if I remember aright) in the annales of that island. To this abbey belonged also divers lands and tithes in the county of Antrim, viz., out of Ballymena..... Campion reports (p. 69) that the said abbey, Innes and Comer, were built A. D. 1198 and 1199; but in all my researches I could not find figures or any stones either of the abbey or of the castles aforesaid, to denote the year when they were erected; and who views the walls and ruins of this monastery, will allow many years to the building of it. The church thereof was in part roofed, and slated, and re-edified, and a yeard thereunto walled about, and a competent stipend given for that by the said first Lord Montgomery; and, in A. D. 1685, it was new roofed again by the heirs of William Montgomery, and by contributions of gentlemen concerned therein."

The miserable condition of this district previous to the
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Settlement of Ulster, by James I, about which time Hugh, afterwards Viscount Montgomery, came over to Ireland—as well as the first steps of the rapid improvement which attended that measure—are strikingly portrayed in the following extract, taken from the Montgomery MSS. just alluded to:—

"In the spring time, 1606, those parishes were now more wasted than America, (when the Spaniards landed there,) but were not at all incumbered with great woods to be felled and grubbed, to the discouragement or hindrance of the inhabitants; for in all those three parishes aforesaid, thirty cabins could not be found, nor any stone walls, but ruined, roofless churches, and a few vaults at Grey abbey, and a stump of an old castle in Newtown, in each of which some gentlemen sheltered themselves at their first coming over. But Sir Hugh, in the said spring, brought with him divers artificers, as smiths, masons, carpenters, &c. They soon made cottages and booths for themselves, because sods and saplins of ashes, alders, and birch trees (above thirty years old) with rushes for thatch, and bushes for wattles, were at hand. And also they made a shelter of the said stump of the castle for Sir Hugh, whose residence was mostly there, as in the centre of being supplied with necessaries from Belfast (but six miles thence), who, therefore, came and set up a market in Newtown, for profit for both the towns. As likewise in the summer season (twice, sometimes thrice, every week), they were supplied from Scotland, as Donaghadec was oftener, because but three hours' sail from Portpatrick, where they bespoke provisions and necessaries to lade in, to be brought over by their own or that town's boats, whenever wind and weather served them, for there

was a constant flux of passengers coming daily over..... 1607, you might see streets and tenements regularly set out, and houses rising as it were out of the ground (like Cadmus's colony) on a sudden, so that these dwellings became towns immediately. Yet among all this care and indefatigable industry for their families, a place of God's honour to dwell in was not forgotten or neglected; for, indeed, our forefathers were more pious than ourselves, and so soon as said stump of the old castle was so repaired (as it was in the spring time, 1606,) as might be shelter for the year's summer and harvest, for Sir Hugh and his servants that winter, his piety made some good store of provisions in those fair seasons, towards roofing and fitting the chance of that church, for the worship of God; and therein he needeth not withdraw his own planters from working for themselves, because there were Irish Gibeonets and Garrons enough in his woods, to hew and draw timber for his sanctuary; and the general free contribution of the planters, some with money, others with handicrafts, and many with labouring, was so great and willingly given, that the next year after this, before winter, it was made decently serviceable; and Sir Hugh had brought over at first two or three chaplains with him for these parishes. In summer, 1608, some of the priory walls were roofed and fitted for his lady and children, and servants (which were many) to live in. Now every body minded their trades, and the plough and the spade, building and setting fruit-trees, &c., in orchards and gardens, and by ditching in their grounds. The old women spun, and the young girls plied their nimble fingers at knitting—and every body was innocently busy. Now the golden peaceable age renewed; no strife, contention, querulous lawyers, or Scottish or Irish feuds between clans and families, and surnames, disturbing the tranquillity of those times; and the towns and temples were erected, with other great works done, even in troublesome years.

"He (Sir Hugh, the first Viscount Montgomery) sent over to Donaghadee (by the understanding Irish then called *Donn da ghee*, i. e. the mount or burial place of the two worthies or heroes) before him some hewn freestone, timber, and iron, &c., of which he caused to be built a low stone walled house for his reception and lodging, when he came from or went to Scotland. Mariners, tradesmen, and others, had made shelter for themselves before this time: but the Viscount's was the first stone dwelling-house in all the parish. He also wholly repaired the Church of Greyabbey."

Of the parish of Greyabbey, in the year 1634, the writer says, that it contained "a double-roofed house, and a baron and fower flankers, with bakeing and brewing houses, stables, and other needful office houses; they are built after the forraigne and English manner, with outer and inner courts walled about, and surrounded with pleasant gardens, orchards, meadows, and pasture enclosures, under view of the said house, called Rosemount, from which the mannor taketh name."

"The manner in which the Montgomery family became possessed of this fine tract of country is gathered from the 'Grand Inquisition of the county of Down.'"

Con O'Neill, chief of South or Upper Clondeboy, whose castle was that of Castlereagh, having about Christmas, 1602, a 'grand debauch' at Castlereagh, with his brothers, friends, and followers, he sent his servants to Belfast for more wine; but, in returning, a quarrel took place between them and some English soldiers, near the Knock Church, and they lost their wine. Con, inquiring into this transaction, learned from themselves that their number exceeded that of the soldiers; on which he swore 'by his father, and the souls of his ancestors,' they should never be servants of his till they had beaten the 'buddagh Sassenagh soldiers.' On this threat they returned, armed, and attacked the soldiers, several of whom were killed in the affray; and Con was soon after taken up as an abettor, and sent prisoner to Carrickfergus castle. The severity of his first confinement was soon mitigated by a permission to walk through the town during the day, attended by a soldier, who returned him to the provost-marshal at night. He at length obtained his liberty in the following manner:—Thomas Montgomery, master of a barque, which traded thither with meal for the garrison, was em-

ployed by Hugh Montgomery, his relation, to endeavour to effect Con's escape. Having got letters conveyed to Con, acquainting him of the steps about to be taken, he began by making love to Annas Dobbyn, daughter of the provost-marshal; and marrying her, through her effected Con's escape, who was conveyed on board Montgomery's vessel, and landed at Largs in Ayrshire. In 1605, Con obtained his pardon from James I. at the suit of the above Hugh Montgomery, and James Hamilton; but for their effecting of his escape, and this service, he had previously made over most of his lands to them, of which they immediately obtained a new patent from the crown. April 25, 1606, we find Con granting the lands of Ballyrosboye, in the Galluagh, between Castlereagh and Belfast to a Thomas Montgomery, probably the above-mentioned Thomas, for his share in effecting his escape.

"Viscount Montgomery brought over a page to his lady, Edward Betty, the prettiest little man I ever beheld. He was of a blooming damask rose complexion; his hair was of a shining gold colour, with natural ring-like curls hanging down, and dangling to his breast, and so exact in the symmetry of his body and limbs to his stature, that no better shape could be desired to a well carved statue. His wit was answerable to what his comely face might promise—and his cunning no less; for many times, when gentlewomen, that did not frequent Newtown-house since the first Viscount's death, till the second lord brought his lady to live therein, came to pay visits to her ladyship, this beautiful mannik was often mistaken for one or the other of his lordship's sons, and taken up by the gentlewomen on their laps, and they kissed him to make him prattle, which he could very well do as a child. He kept them in their ignorance so long as to have occasion enough to make his lady sport: nay, sometimes he would protract his converse till his lady came from her chamber to see the female visitants, his unmannerlyness being reproved by his lady, so to impose on the gentlewomen, as to sit on their knee and promote the error. You may believe the mistaken ladies blushed, and were extremely ashamed—and this happened when he had passed twenty years of age."

A REGULAR GASCONADE.

A Gascon, who had been for some years in the service of Louis the Fourteenth, obtained from him a gratuity of fifteen hundred livres. He went immediately to be paid by M. Colbert, who had just sat to table; notwithstanding, the Gascon passed into the dining-room, and asked who was Colbert?

"I am the person," said Colbert, "what would you be pleased to have?"

"A trifle scarce worth mentioning, a small order of the king for letting me have fifteen hundred livres."

M. Colbert, according to his usual good humour, desired him to be seated at table, and partake of their fare. After dinner the applicant was directed by Colbert to one of his clerks, who gave him one thousand livres.

The Gascon said "that there were five hundred more coming to him."

"Very true," said the clerk, "but so much of the payment has been stopped for your dinner."

"What! five hundred livres for a dinner! I give but twenty sous at the eating-house."

"That may be, but you have had the honour to dine with M. Colbert, that great and first minister of state, and it is but fit you should pay for the honour."

"Well, then, if it be so," replied the Gascon, "here, take back all the money; what signifies my incumbering myself with one thousand livres? To-morrow I'll bring here a friend to dine, and all will be paid."

Monsieur Colbert admired the gasconade, had the officer paid the whole of his bill, and afterwards rendered him several good offices.

At Shanmore, in the county of Down, some years ago, in cutting a channel for a canal, a subterraneous forest of fallen trees, of oak, ash, alder, &c., was discovered lying for nearly a mile in length, under a covering of earth, in some places six in others eight feet deep,